Crystalization

Weighing is a way to assess the risk of arguments against each other. Crystaization, however, is much more important because weighing is only one part.

Crystalization explains the functions of different arguments.

Crystalization explains the interconnectedness of different arguments.

Crystalization resolves conflicts and deadlocks in the debate.

Crystalization tells the story of how a judge can vote for a debater.

Terminal Impact Comparison: These arguments have ends-based impacts coming out of a link story. Some ways include magnitude, probability, timeframe, reversibility, and repetition. Because the latter three are truly subsets of magnitude and probability, you can say that you outweigh on magnitude by using more specific metrics. The ultimate risk of an impact is magnitude times probability. (To show that the risk of an infinite magnitude, low probability impact is infinity, look up a card by Shell.)

How do we apply this impact-weighing in debate rounds?

You can either way in the line-by-line or by crystallization. The first primary form of crystallization is voting issues: why I’m winning the argument and why you’re voting for me off it even if I’m losing others. Giving voting issues as you go usually involves explaining the argument, extending it, and then saying, “This is a voting issue.” Doing voting issues on the line-by-line saves time, but doing them at the end allows you to be more organized and clear.

What are the problems with the basics?

First, the weighing metrics are often too simple, especially because many LD impacts are nebulous. These don’t help very much on truth statement resolutions. Voting issues can be archaic and often oversimplify the round. Storytelling itself mainly involves listing the layers of the debate. Emphasizing formulas decreases debaters’ abilities to make good decisions for themselves.

Advanced Weighing Analysis: Link level weighing includes comparing strength of the links to an impact. This weighing can include extent of contest and the length of the link chain. You can also weigh on sufficiency from one argument to the value. Also, extent of consent is still a viable reason to prefer. Further, you can weigh on extent of controversy. Finally, you can weigh off strength of warrant.

Why is it important to begin weighing early in the debate?

Benefits of weighing preemptively: Weighing earlier allows you to answer your opponent’s answer. Also, you get increased clarity because the more weighing that happens, the judge has a better conception of what happened. Third, you avoid the strategic skew of weighing in the 2NR and not being able to respond to your opponent’s responses. Fourth, preemptive weighing arguments can get dropped or mishandled, meaning an extension can win you the round.

Pre-round weighing: You must consider what you will need to outweigh before you actually write your case. The standard, first of all, sets up what impacts are important in the round. 1AC weighing can help, but it can also attract your opponent’s attraction and you may not weigh against the correct positions.

Good crystallization: Have a good big picture view of the debate round. You must understand what’s happening to be able to explain what’s happening. Judging rounds can help. The 2NR must use foresight to determine what the 2AR will do so that you can preempt what they will say. You must be able to separate yourself from your belief that you’re winning every argument, because if you keep insisting on that, you can’t weigh properly. Most importantly, you can’t make mistakes because if you get caught lying, then you lose credibility.

Bad crystallization: Many debaters just try to repeat the important points. Many debaters don’t even crystallize at all. The 2AR goes line-by-line and doesn’t compare to any NC arguments. If you’re trying to write the ballot, write a ballot that doesn’t make it sound subjective and biased. Don’t try to make the judge forget about an argument by not mentioning it: the judge will still consider it, only without your influence.

Try to give the judge multiple outs to vote for you. Give multiple “even if” scenarios.

How to combat crystallization: It is difficult for the 1AR to make 2NR crystallization difficult because you’re early in the round and you don’t have enough time. However, as Neg preempt the arguments that the 2AR will extend (typically the same arguments as the 1AR). Make it clear when you extend defense and explain its interaction with the Aff’s offensive argument. Attempt to actively outweigh what you think they will use to weigh. Prevent Aff from running “even if” stories. Leave some prep time before the crystallization parts of the round.